Trucial Oman MK4

162, 166, 619, 101, 622, 361, 438

/For an account of the settled tribes of Oman and the Trucial Coast in 1920--territory occupied, rulers, brief history, their settlements, means of livelihood, etc. see 30: Great Britain, Saudi Arabia MJ1, category 116, pp. 546-602./

1: Melamid K-4 (no date) 1963 MK4 Trucial Oman MK 4 •
Qatar MK 3

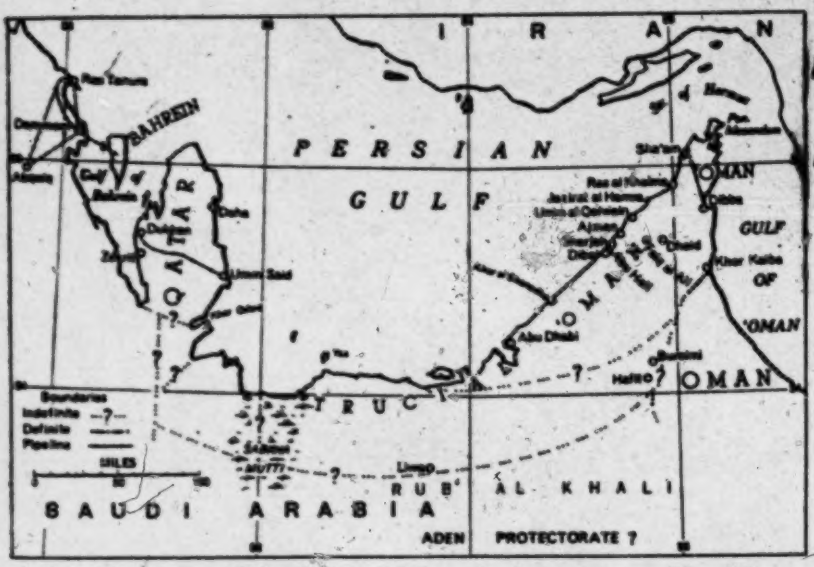

FIG. 1—Location map of Trucial 'Oman and Qatar, showing various reported boundaries.

number of cattle is small. Wells are far apart; many are brackish, and only a few have sufficient water for surface or subsurface irrigation. Thus the whole peninsula of Qatar contains only two or three struggling date gardens. Larger wells are reported below the foothills of the mountains of 'Oman, which explain the more extensive date gardens there (similar to those of the Batinah Coast, on the east side of the mountain range) and the cultivation of some cereals. The total population is small and largely migratory. Estimates range from 7000 to 25,000 for Qatar, and from 40,000 to 105,000 for the remainder of the coast, concentrated in the northeastern part; from the base of the Qatar peninsula to Abu Dhabi the coast is reported to be virtually empty of human beings today, except for a few Bedouins migrating from the inland wells of Liwa.[1]

Because of the scanty endowment of the land, occupations deriving revenue from the sea became dominant. The port of Sharjah was reported to send 350 boats to the pearl fishery and to have in addition about a hundred fishing boats.[2] Pearling is generally limited to a small but indented stretch of coast near this port, and receipts are believed to fluctuate substantially from year to year.[3] The growth of both fishing and pearling is assumed to be related, [illegible] since none of the earlier observers commented on them.

[1] W[ilfred] Thesiger: Across the Empty Quarter, *Geogr. Journ.*, Vol. 111, 1948, pp. 1–21; reference on p. 9.

[2] S. B. Miles: The Country and Tribes of the Persian Gulf (2 vols., London, 1919), Vol. 2, p. 442.

[3] Raymond O'Shea: The Sand Kings of Oman (London, 1947), p. 132.

1: Malamid K-4 (no date) 1953 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

TABLE I—*Continued*

STATE	POLITICAL STATUS	CAPITAL AND POPULATION	REPORTED BOUNDARIES	REMARKS
RALBA	Trucial sheikhdom since 1937.	Kalba, 3000 to 5000	On the coast of the Gulf of 'Oman north at Dibba, south at Khor Kalba; includes territory on the west side of the mountains of 'Oman.	In the past tributary to Sharjah.
'OMAN	Independent British-protected sultanate.	Muscat, 500,000	Exclave on the peninsula of Musandam west at Sha'am; east at Dibba; main territory on Gulf of 'Oman east of Khor Kalba.	'Oman sovereignty over peninsula of Musandam established with British help.
OTHER TERRITORIES:				
FUJAIRAH	Sheikhdom without Trucial status.	....	Probably enclave in Kalba located primarily near the Gulf of 'Oman.	In the past probably tributary to Sharjah.
BURAIMI	Neutral area claimed by Saudi Arabia, 'Oman, and Abu Dhabi.	5000	Probably bounded by many Trucial sheikhdoms and 'Oman.	Inland oasis reported before 1625 and today under the influence of Abu Dhabi.
HAFIT	Reported joint property of Abu Dhabi and 'Oman.	....	....	Near Buraimi.
DHAID	Reported as neutral part of Sharjah, and part of Kalba.	....	....	On motor road from the Persian Gulf to Gulf of 'Oman.
LIWA	Political control nowhere described.	....	....	Southwest of Abu Dhabi; reported to be trading with Abu Dhabi.

*Parts of the region between the boundaries of Qatar and the town of Abu Dhabi may be territory of Saudi Arabia. South of the town of Abu Dhabi there may be territory of the Trucial sheikhdoms or of Saudi Arabia or of 'Oman or of Aden Protectorate.

As Sir Percy Cox[1]!

writes: "The relative position of the Principalities . . . depends almost entirely on the personalities of the ruling Shaikhs for the time being. Unfortunately, owing to the chronic prevalence . . . of . . . feuds, they have for the last few generations been a short-lived class." Besides the territories of the sheikhs, there are neutral areas. In one of them, the Buraimi Oasis, near the border of 'Oman, a durbar (an official meeting of all the Trucial sheikhs with a British representative) took place in 1945;[8] this inconveniently located place was selected because sheikhs' wars prevented the choice of a better place near the coast. Another neutral area (although there seems to be a difference of opinion on its status) is the oasis of Dhaid,[9] on the motorcar route from Sharjah to the

[8] O'Shea, *op. cit.* [see footnote 3, above], p. 171. See below (p. 204) for other claims to Buraimi.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 158. See also Desmond Vesey-Fitzgerald: From Hasa to Oman by Car, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 41, 1951, pp. 540-560; reference on p. 553.

[1] [For footnote, see p. 197 of text -- Analyst]

2: O'Shea G-3 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

133 pearl boats, avoid these waters. It is here that the principal Oman pearl banks lie. The most important islands off the Trucial Coast are Bu Musa, which contains a red ochre mine; Tunb; Sir Bu Na'air; Yas, where there is an R.A.F. emergency landing ground; and Dalmah.

132. The climate is extremely severe in the summer months. From May to October, the combined heat and humidity are very trying to Europeans; temperatures of 115° F. and humidity of 98° are common. In the winter months, from November to February, it is pleasantly cool by day and cold at night, but frost is unknown; at this time the weather on the coast is frequently boisterous. Rainfall averages about 5 in. a year, and falls chiefly in mid-winter, when storms are extremely severe. On 30th November, 1944, the Indian Meteorological department at Sharjah recorded a rainfall of 1.75 in. within twenty minutes and a wind of 78 miles an hour.

● 162 Tribally and racially the people of the Trucial Coast are very mixed, Arabs, Persians, Baluchis, Hindus, and a large number of Arab slaves and their progeny forming the bulk of the population. The Bedouins, who some years ago were estimated to number 8,000, are mostly confined to the open desert, although they are now more amiably disposed to the settled tribes and townships than formerly; the largest of the Bedouin tribes in Oman is that of the Beni Qitab, whose ruler is the Sheikh Mahommed bin Ali. The Bedouins live chiefly by their livestock, although some nowadays take part in pearling and fishing during the season. In winter time, when there is a fine amount of herbage for their herds, they scatter and move from encampment to encampment, but in summer they congregate in large numbers around the more copious wells in the desert. The Jiri plain in the north and Bainumah in the west, are favourite places.

241 There is little agriculture in Trucial Oman. Dates can be grown in most places, although the Arabs are extremely conservative and are averse from attempting new projects. The only large-scale date plantations are at Falaj-al-Ali and Djaidh. Inland, west of the Shimailiyah mountains and the Sir Wadhi, some cereals, wheat, tobacco and *jowari* are grown, and vegetables can be raised by means

231 of well irrigation. Cows, donkeys, camels, goats and sheep are kept, and plenty of poultry, but little appears to be known of diseases of the latter, and in 1944 they died in large numbers. The normal food for cattle is fish and boiled date stones, and herbage when it can be found. Except for the famous stables of Sheikh

3: Melamid S-3 (no date) 1954 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

TABLE I—SUMMARY OF CHANGES IN TRUCIAL SHEIKHDOMS

TRUCIAL SHEIKHDOM	RECENT CHANGES
ABU DHABI	The largest Trucial sheikhdom, territorially better consolidated than before. Prospecting for oil proceeds on land; oil, of a better quality than the other Arabian oils, has been discovered at Murban (about 23° 50′ N. and 53° 45′ E.), but the full significance of the discovery has not yet been evaluated. A new oil concession, to last 65 years, for the offshore subsurface rights in the Persian Gulf, as defined in the 1951 arbitration award, was granted to a combination of British (Anglo-Iranian Oil Company) and French companies in March, 1953; the area is described as exceeding 12,000 square miles (no information has been released to show how this figure was calculated); under the terms of the concession, exploration must begin within a year, and drilling within five years.
DIBAI	The town of Dibai is expanding rapidly; its population is now estimated at 38,000. Two commercial banks and a hospital have been established, and there are regular bimonthly mail-steamer connections with Iraq and India. In view of the growth of Dibai, the headquarters of the British Political Agent for Trucial 'Oman are being transferred there from Sharjah. An offshore concession described as covering 1300 square miles was granted in August, 1952, to the same group of companies that have obtained the Abu Dhabi offshore concession; the terms also are the same, except that the duration is limited to 60 years. Drilling to 12,000 feet has produced no oil so far.
SHARJAH	Probably now the second largest of the Trucial sheikhdoms; includes the inland oasis of Dhaid and the town of Kalba, on the Gulf of 'Oman. The aerodrome near the town of Sharjah is served by three flights a week from Bahrein, the only regular air service to Trucial 'Oman.
AJMAN	No change.
UMM AL QAIWAIN	" "
RAS AL KHAIMA	" "
FUJAIRA	Trucial sheikhdom since 1952; economically unimportant.

by the Sultan of Muscat and 'Oman. After some skirmishes between the troops of Saudi Arabia and British-officered Trucial 'Oman levies, a standstill agreement, similar to the Palestine armistice agreements, was reached, which stabilized for the time being the positions occupied by the various states and armies. Owing to the location of Hamasa between the other villages of the oasis, this standstill agreement has resulted in some form of blockade of the forces of Saudi Arabia there; Saudi Arabian efforts to supply Hamasa have led to further bloodshed and complaints to the United Nations. Since the oasis of Buraimi contains the only sizable wells in the eastern Rub' al Khali desert, possession of, and free access to, all or parts of it is important to anyone who desires to rule, and exploit the minerals of, the Empty Quarter of Arabia. Several suggestions for amicable settlement or arbitration of the dispute have been made, particularly by the new King of Saudi Arabia (*New York Times*, Nov. 11, 1953). In view of the importance of the oasis, definite boundaries between Saudi Arabia, Trucial 'Oman, the Sultanate of Muscat and 'Oman (in whose Dhofar region a group of American oil companies has a concession), and possibly Aden Protectorate may now be established, though the process of definition would take some time. All the oil companies operating in the states concerned have announced their agreement to any new boundaries that may be drawn.—ALEXANDER MELAMID

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

ARID ZONE RESEARCH. "Reviews of Research on Arid Zone Hydrology" (Paris, 1953) is the first fruit of UNESCO's Arid Zone Programme, which had its beginning in 1948. For study purposes the arid lands of the world were divided into eight regions—

63:5immons et al G-5 (1941-1951) 1954
M1 Middle East
TRUCIAL OMAN MK 4

offshore. The interior country in the north is hilly, with an average elevation of about 500 feet, but toward the southwest it becomes progressively flatter and more desolate. The portion from Abu Dhabi to Khor al Odaid is barren and virtually uninhabited.

The climate is particularly trying in the summer months from May to October, when temperatures of 115° F. and humidity readings of 90 to 98 per cent are frequently recorded. In contrast, the days from November to February are agreeably cool, while the nights often are cold. The rainfall is irregular, and normally approximates 4 to 5 inches a year. It is usually concentrated in sudden and violent storms during the mid-winter months.

POPULATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The population of Trucial Oman is not accurately known, but in 1951 it was estimated at about 80,000, including Bedouin tribes totaling possibly 8,000. The settled inhabitants are of mixed racial stock. They are predominantly Arabs, but Negro admixtures, descendants of former slaves from Africa, and communities of Baluchis, Iranians and Indians are prominent. Except for a few Hindus, the majority are Moslems. Most of the Arabs belong to the Wahhabi branch of the Sunni sect of Islam.

The chief occupations of the people are pearl diving, fishing, shipbuilding and date cultivation. Some of the best pearling reefs in the Persian Gulf are found off the Trucial Coast, and Dibai long has been recognized as the center of activity in the southern Gulf region. The industry has declined within recent years, but, in more favorable times, thousands of pearling vessels are said to have put out from Trucial Oman ports each season from early summer to November.

Agriculture is of secondary importance, being confined to areas in which water is available for irrigation. Date groves exist along the coast as far west as Abu Dhabi, and small amounts of millet, wheat, tobacco

164 Over 50 per cent of the individuals treated
[758] in the oil company dispensary in 1950 were suffering from conjunctivitis.

164 Skin infections are prevalent. Where
312 water is scarce the Moslem tribes sometimes
228 employ sand in the ablutions required according to religious rites. As a consequence, many acquire infections in existing abrasions of the skin. Ulcers on legs and arms are observed repeatedly. Skin diseases are reported to be particularly evident among the pearl divers.

164 Leprosy is present, but no studies have
361 been made to determine the distribution of the infection. Some tribes are said to ostracize lepers and to require them to live in segregated colonies.

Diseases Spread by Arthropods

164 Malaria is highly endemic in the towns
136 and agricultural areas, while extensive outbreaks are reported from time to time. Transmission probably is most active from April to June and from October to January, as in the oases on the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia. All forms of the disease are encountered, but outbreaks usually are attributed to *Plasmodium falciparum*. *P. vivax* predominated among the cases in which the type was determined at the oil company dispensary in 1950. Among 17 cases treated in that year, 5 were classified as due to *P. vivax*; 3, to *P. malariae*; 1, to *P. falciparum*; while 8 were not identified.

Outbreaks of sandfly fever and dengue fever are recorded occasionally, but the incidence of other arthropod-borne diseases is uncertain.

SUMMARY

162 Trucial Oman, formerly designated as the
161 "Pirate Coast," comprises 7 independent
361 sheikhdoms on the eastern coast of Arabia, near the entrance to the Persian Gulf. The population is heterogeneous, although predominantly Arab and Moslem. In 1951, it was estimated at 80,000, including about 10 per cent belonging to nomadic Bedouin tribes.

p. 314(B)

30: Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Trucial Oman MK4

133 The coast on the Gulf of Oman is bolder, the hills sometimes coming down to the water's edge, and the hilly tract inland, perhaps 20 miles in breadth, is the highest part of the whole territory. The interior of Trucial Oman, approached from the Persian Gulf, consists of a low and sandy maritime plain (*taff*) almost entirely unsuited for tillage, though not without natural vegetation and even wood, and provided with enough wells and water-holes to support a scanty Bedouin population. Beyond the *taff* are inland plains containing tracts with occasional cultivation, of which *Jiri*, *Dheid*, and *Liwah* are the best known.

Climate

132 Between November and April the heat is bearable and the nights are cool. From May to September the climate is excessively hot. The rainfall, which is confined to the winter months, is believed to be about 5 in., and would therefore approximate to that of Bahrein (see p. 312).

Population

• 162 619 The ethnology of the tribes inhabiting Trucial Oman is often intricate and perplexing. The tribes which are numerically the most important are the following:

Beni Yās, in the Abu Dhabi Principality (10,000 settled, 2,000 nomadic); Sharqiyīn, in the *Shameilīyah* tract and *Ras el-Kheimah* district in the Oman promontory (7,000 settled); Āl 'Ali, chiefly at *Umm el-Qaiwein* (6,750 settled); Āl Bu Maheir, in all coast towns (5,500); Sūdān, in coast towns and *Bu Mūsa* Island (5,000); Na'īm, in Central Oman promontory (3,500 settled and 1,200 nomad); Za'āb, in *Jezirat el-Hamra* and *Khōr Kalba* in the Shārjah Principality (3,500); Ahl Ras el-Kheimah, in the town and district of that name (2,000); Shihūh (2,500) and Taneij (2,500 settled and 1,500 nomad), in the same places; Beni Qitab (2,000 nomad), in Shārjah territory; Shweihiyīn (2,000), in *Dibai* and *Shārjah*. Several of these tribes are also represented in the Sultanate of Oman, in El-Qatar, and in Bahrein. In addition may be mentioned 1,500 *Hūwalah* in *Shārjah* town; 1,400 Baluchis at *Dibai*; about 2,500 Persians in *Abu Dhabi* and *Dibai* towns, *Khōr Fakkān* and *Ghāllah*; some hundreds of Hindus in the coast towns, and numerous negro slaves.

162 665 795 The total population has been estimated at over 80,000 only 8,000 being nomadic. The people are divided between the Hināwi

30: Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Trucial Oman MK4

and Ghāfiri political factions (see Chap. VIII, p. 240), the former being Sunnis of the Maliki sect, the latter virtually Wahabis, though not of the militant order. Modern rifles are widely distributed both in town and country, but the traffic in arms has now been virtually suspended (cf. p. 247).

Industries and Trade

The most important industry is pearl-diving, which in summer employs most of the able-bodied men with more than 1,200 boats; though during the winter some of the divers take part in the ordinary fisheries (the second great industry of the coast), the majority take their ease, retained by the pearl-boat owners and contractors, by whom they are supported through the slack season. Agriculture employs the settled population of the interior; vegetables are raised by irrigation from wells in most places, and dates are also grown, though they seldom fully ripen S. of Ras el-Kheimah. Cereals only succeed in a few favoured spots such as *Sīr* in the Shameilīyah district. The live stock of the villages consists of camels, donkeys, cattle, sheep, and goats; horses are rare. The Bedouins subsist chiefly by their herds. In winter, when there is pasture, they roam far and wide; in the hot weather they gather about the more abundant wells, such as those of the *Jiri* plain in the N., and *Beinūnah* in the W.

Pearls are the most valuable export, and are sent almost entirely to India from the port of Dibai. The oyster-shells from which the pearls are taken come next in importance; it is questioned whether the practice of selling these, instead of at once returning them to the sea, may not in the long run tend to exhaust the pearl-banks. Dried fish are exported from Abu Dhabi.

The imports in order of their value are: grain and pulse, from India and Persia; cotton piece-goods from India; dates and date-juice from 'Irāq; coffee, chiefly from India; sugar, from or through India, and miscellaneous provisions from Persia. The only steamship port is Dibai, but the other coastal towns are used by native sea-going boats running to and from India, Persia, and 'Irāq. Inland trade with the Bedouins is of no great volume, but Trucial Oman shares that of the Bireimi oasis with the Sultanate. The coast between Ras Musandam and Abu Dhabi was formerly used as a base by smugglers of arms, bringing rifles and ammunition from Sohār through Bireimi, and loading for Persia and El-Qatar either at the coastal towns, or at lonely spots between them. Within recent years it was necessary to warn the Sheikhs of 'Ajmān, Shārjah,

30: Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Trucial Oman MK4

and is said to be a meeting-ground of the Beni Yās, Manāsir, and Na'īm tribes. 634 133

Of the islands, only *Dalmah* and *Yās* need be described. The former lies more than 40 miles E. by S. of the mouth of the *Khōr el-'Odeid*, and about half that distance from the nearest point of the coast to the SE. It is 5 miles by 2½ miles, and for the most part hilly, with wells of brackish water and deposits of red oxide of iron. There is a small settlement of Beni Yās; but the chief importance of the island is that at the end of the pearling season a temporary bazaar is set up, and persons engaged in the trade, including the Indian merchants of the Trucial Coast, go there to collect debts and purchase pearls. Yās is about 20 miles SE. of Dalmah, and only a few miles from the shore at Jebel Dhannah. It is 6½ miles by 5 miles, with low shores, but central volcanic hills; at the S. end is a landlocked natural harbour known to British sailors as Meriton Bay, with a depth of 4–6 fathoms. Water is only obtainable after rain. The island is visited in winter by Beni Yās fishermen. 361

II. Dibai

This small principality lies on the Gulf Coast S. of Shārjah, between Abu Heil on the N. and the creek Khōr Ghanādhah on the S.; its extent towards the interior is not precisely known. It consists of low sandy country without important natural features, the only hill being Jebel el-'Āli, 19 miles SW. of Dibai town, which, though only 225 ft. high, is a landmark visible for 17 miles. The town contains almost the whole settled population, the only other places with permanent inhabitants being the small coast village of *Jumeirah*, 3 miles to the SW., and the larger isolated village of *Hajarein*, 50 miles away to the SE. in the Wādi Hatta, an isolated dependency, geographically belonging to the Sultanate of Oman. 635 133 361

The ruler of Dibai is Sheikh Sa'īd ibn Makhtūm, who succeeded his cousin Būti ibn Suheil in 1912, and is at feud with the latter's family. He is a wealthy chief, owing to the commercial importance of his capital, but his relations with the Indian Government have not been uniformly good; in August 1913 he had to be warned because a boat of H.M.S. *Sphinx* was fired on from the town. There had been trouble under previous rulers, chiefly owing to the use of Dibai by smugglers of arms (see above, p. 336). 622

The town of **Dibai**, with a population perhaps not far from 20,000, lies 7 miles SW. of Shārjah and 79 miles NE. of Abu Dhabi, on both sides of a creek with a shallow entrance extending some miles to the SE.; it was once walled, but with the exception of towers on 361 438 162.

30: Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Trucial Oman MK4

361 438 162 the landward side, the defences are ruinous. There is good water in wells from 5 to 30 ft. deep. The town has three main quarters: (1) *Deirah*, on a tongue of land on the NE. side of the creek, between it and the sea, with a date-grove at the back, contains the main bazaar of 350 shops and about 1,600 houses, inhabited by Arabs, Persians, Baluchis, and others; (2) *Shandaghah*, on the SW. side of the creek, contains a residence of the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, with about 250 houses all occupied by Arabs, domicile being forbidden to others; (3) *Dibai* proper, on the same side but farther from the sea, with about 200 houses, 50 shops, and the principal mosque, is the quarter in which British-Indian subjects are collected.

The chief elements of the population are: Beni Yās (440 houses), Āl Bu Maheir (400 houses), mixed Arabs, including natives of Hasa, Bahrein, and Koweit (400 houses), Persians (250 houses), Sūdān (250 houses), and Baluchis (200 houses). The people own about 4,000 date-trees; other cultivation is confined to a little lucerne; live stock includes nearly 2,000 camels, 400 donkeys, 400 head of cattle, and about 1,000 goats. There are about 335 pearl-boats, and 20 sea-going vessels.

504 The importance of Dibai lies in its increasing use as a port of call for steamers, which lie outside the creek; the place has largely supplanted Lingeh in Persia as the chief distributing centre of foreign goods to the interior, especially to the Bireimi oasis. Before the war, steamers of the British India and Bombay and Persia Steam Navigation Companies called at the port, the first at regular fortnightly intervals.

III. Shārjah

635 This is the most important of the principalities, having coasts on both gulfs, and covering a considerable portion of the Oman promontory. With the exception of the Sheikhdoms of 'Ajmān and Umm el-Qaiwein on the W. coast, and a part of the interior which is to all intents and purposes independent, it practically includes everything between a line from Sha'am to Dibah on the N., and Shārjah town and Khōr Kalba on the S. The principality is nominally all under the Sheikh Khālid ibn Ahmed, who succeeded Sajar ibn Khālid in 1914. But, as in Bahrein, his resources are curtailed by the cession of important territory as fiefs or appanages. The Sheikh rules Shārjah town and district, and the Oasis of Dheid is administered by a Vali in his name. But Ras el-Kheimah, under the late reign, had almost attained a recognized independence; and the important Shameiliyah district on the Gulf of Oman, nominally a fief held by a member of the ruling family residing in 'Aimān, has

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[162]

2: Codrai G-3 (1948-1950)1950 MKI Oman
Trucial Oman MK4

The market-place at Dibai (a small British export area for less refined goods), where mingle both coastal and bedouin Arabs, Persians, Indians and Negroes.

P. 190(C)

2: Codrai G-3 (1948-1950) 1950 MK1 Oman
Trucial Oman MK4
Bedouin MJ4

To
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[181]

ladies' lingerie, but he has little use for some of the strange products of the West. For the townsman, who is living in a mixed community of Arabs from many parts of the Persian Gulf, Persians and Indians, it is a different proposition, and his materialism has made Dibai a small British export area, though mostly for the less refined goods that are unable to find buyers on a more discriminating market.

B
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721
661

The primitive bedouins who live by the foothills of the main mountain range, who owe allegiance to no one, are a constant cause of worry to the sheikhs, from whom they extract levies in return for protection; if the money is not forthcoming they raid the villages and carry off goods, camels and children. On the whole, however, the people of the coast seem to have a peaceful enough existence, making their living by, among other things, pearling, fishing and boat-building.

To
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396
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To
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At several points along the coast the wells are some distance inland, and water has to be transported to the villages by camel or donkey. Though brackish and unpalatable, it is expensive; the cost of buying water is a burden on the poor, and they take only sufficient for their minimum needs. Even so, the water-pot is always at hand when a traveller passes by — a simple hospitality that is often very touching. The lot of the dogs, a wretched one at the best of times in the

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P. 191 (B)

S: Cobra G-3 (1948-1950) 1950 MK1 Oman
Trucial Oman MK4
Bedouin MJ4

000 Arab World, is made ghastly by this local scarcity of water, and they can be seen watching, and sometimes licking, the gloss which is the only indication of a slight trickle from a hole in the side of a house. At other times they try to keep cool by lying at the edge of the sea, until their thirst proves too great, and they take their last drink.

TO
●162 **Slavery still Exists**

567 The population is predominantly Arab,
191 but Persians, Baluchis, Somalis and Negroes
595 make up a considerable section of the coast-
144 dwellers. Many of the latter are slaves; and in this polyglot society, practising polygamy and concubinage, the Arab's blood is seldom free from non-Arab strains. Although the importation of slaves from Africa and Persia is officially said to have been abolished, there is no reason to suppose that this form of trading has ceased entirely; for Britain no longer exercises her right to search vessels, and the chances of any law-breaker getting caught are very small. In addition, children are still abducted from their villages by bedouin raiders, and are sold in the market at Biraimi, the neutral region in the desert about one hundred miles to the

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TO
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P. 192 (A)

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164 MORBIDITY--incidence, nature, and distribution of various diseases and accidents (e.g., by location, season, sex, age, occupation); occurrence of epidemics; evidence of immunity or susceptibility to disease; dental ailments; etc.
See also:

Morbidity as a social problem 73
Theory and treatment of disease 75
Care of infants and children 85
Malnutrition and dietary deficiencies . . . 148
Incidence of neuroses and psychoses 150
Public health 744

Freya Stark, who is always interesting and whose descriptions of native life and architecture are fascinating and picturesque. But even this intrepid traveller is inclined to stress the poetical side of her experiences, and to leave out the realities of smell and dirt. For dirty and smelly Arabia is.

The villages have no drainage or sanitation; garbage and offal are thrown on a heap outside the houses, or on the sea-shore, there to be removed in time by those voracious scavengers, the vultures and kites. It is a common experience to see the carcases of donkeys and other livestock lying on the shore, swollen and covered with flies, decaying under the hot sun. The stench within half a mile of an Arab village is simply appalling; one would be truthful if unkind to describe the Arab as having no prejudices against filth. In their persons the lower classes are extremely dirty by European standards, although they can scarcely be blamed for not taking baths, since water invariably has to be carried for several miles from the wells on the backs of donkeys and is, consequently, expensive. The Arab workers are very poorly paid, and prefer to spend their small earnings on food for their families, and the rare luxuries in which they indulge. The current belief that the Arabs 'wash' themselves in the sand is an anomaly. According to the Koran they are supposed to carry out a certain number of ablutions during the year, especially during the fast of Ramadan and the anniversary of the Prophet's death. As water is scarce, they obey the Holy Book by making a token ablution with sand. Anyone familiar with the grimy grey sand one finds in the vicinity of a village will realize that, used as a 'cleansing' agent, it probably contributes to the sores and skin infections from which so many of them suffer.

Another serious cause of infection are the flies, which breed in that climate on a scale to be observed nowhere else in the world. I have seen a plate of fresh dates carried a few yards from one room to another across an open courtyard. By the time it reached the second room it would be covered with a mass of flies at least two inches deep. Incredible to the insect-free European, this must be seen to be believed. Yet the Arab would not think of cleansing food that had been thus contaminated. He nonchalantly sweeps away the flies with his sleeve and proceeds to masticate the polluted mess with relish.

Apart from the piles of offal and refuse which are a feature of every village, another inducement to flies are the windowless shops

in which dried fish, raw meat, ghee butter and other foodstuffs are openly displayed. These goods are always black with flies and as one drives through the narrow streets of the shopping centre a black, buzzing cloud obscures the windscreen. In summer it is much worse. The Arabs are curiously indifferent to this plague of dirt, bad odour and insects, and will sit for hours outside the shops, idly gossiping, while flies settle on their beards and faces, fall into their Turkish tea, or get mixed up with their rice. It is almost impossible not to swallow flies when one is talking, and the only remedy when in these districts is to keep one's mouth tightly shut. I have seen Arab babies lying in the open air, their eyes swollen and festered from some disease and covered with flies. Trachoma and cataract are common troubles among the Arabs, and it is surprising that epidemics of typhoid and dysentery are not frequent.

The blame for this state of affairs cannot be laid on the Arab peasantry, who are illiterate, badly paid and poorly nourished. They have been brought up for centuries in primitive surroundings and have come to regard their way of life as natural and even congenial. It is curious that where the poorer class of Arab has come into close contact with the American or Englishman he has imitated, in a bizarre and comic fashion, the Western style of dress, but he has stopped short at the more important aspects of our civilization. Perhaps, in his present state of culture, the Arab has an ingrained scorn of sanitation and health. By disposition, and owing to the intense heat of the summer months, he is a lazy individual, judged by our standards, working only when he must or when the fancy takes him. But there are deeper reasons for the Arab's tolerance of dirt and disease. To say that his attitude is inborn, as some visitors to the Middle East are prone to do, is begging the question.

The Arab has some admirable virtues, not the least of which is his strong sense of hospitality and charity. The poor man seldom goes away empty-handed, and the visitor is always sure of a meal, a resting-place for the night, and coffee. If not always strictly truthful, the Arab is unfailingly polite and his courteous manners would often put a European to shame. He has outstanding courage, particularly in battle, and despises meanness and immorality. He is frugal, kindly unless his fierce pride and spirit of independence are upset, and intensely religious. Indeed, what impressed me most about the Arabs of all classes was their extreme devotion to the faith of the Prophet, and their realistic interpretation of the Koran, which means more to them in their daily lives than the Bible means

2: O'Shea G-3 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

of sharks made their appearance off the banks and attacked nearly thirty divers, two of whom were killed under water, the others being rescued in a precarious condition.

Diving is carried out every day during fine weather, work commencing an hour after sunrise and ceasing an hour before sunset. The interval between the early morning prayer and the start of diving is spent by the crews in opening the oysters collected on the previous day. This is done with crooked knives called *mufaliq*, under the superintendence of the *Nakhuda*, who weighs and registers the pearls. The stench arising from this operation must be smelt to be believed. Before they start work the divers are allowed a light meal of half a pound of dates and a few cups of coffee each. Once they have entered the water work is continued without intermission until *Dhuhr*, about 2 p.m., when it is suspended for prayers, a few cups of coffee, and an hour's rest. After *Maghrib*, or evening prayers, the divers take a substantial meal of fish, rice and dates and then, after a little smoking and coffee-drinking, retire to rest for the night.

Divers sometimes suffer from the stings of the devil-fish, and when there are many of these about they wear a long white shirt to protect them from their embraces. Although a very fatiguing occupation, diving is not particularly injurious to the health, and is practised even by old men. In some cases it gives rise to diseases of the respiratory system and to deafness. Skin disease is a common ailment amongst divers, who guard against it by rubbing themselves with *jafi*, a concoction made from the inner shell of the Persian acorn. Senna leaves and other herbs are taken in cases of sickness, but if serious illness occurs, recourse is had to cautery with a hot iron.

Pearl diving is nearly always an hereditary occupation. The reason for this is purely economic. During the off-season the divers have to provide for their families and are often too lazy to undertake any other kind of work, although a few take up fishing. Being an extravagant class, they soon spend the money they have made from diving, and are obliged to borrow from the *Nakhuda*. They are seldom able to repay this debt, the interest on which accumulates, and the only way in which it can be repaid is by means of annual instalments deducted from their diving pay and bonuses. Thus a family of divers, to the second or third generation, may be indebted to a *Nakhuda* or his heirs and, unless the diver finds an alternative means of repaying the debt, he must continue diving to the end of his days, and his son after him.

coco-nut trees grow down to the shore on either side of the creek, on the southern side of which is a palm-mat 'summer palace' belonging to the Sheikh of Ras-al-Khaimah, now used to house a discarded wife. The town is divided by the creek into two sections—Dubai proper, where the merchants and wealthier classes live, and Dera, the fishermen's quarter. We made for the latter and moored alongside a primitive wooden jetty beside which large pearling dhows were undergoing a careen.

The streets of Dera are filthy in the extreme, the inhabitants living in hovels roofed with palm-matting supported by wooden joists. The only presentable house was the coral and mortar residence of Ali, the Anglo-Persian Company's agent in Dubai; we stopped here for a few minutes and had a cup of tea made with condensed milk. The Arabs, whose chief occupation is pearl diving, fishing, shipbuilding and wool-weaving, were ragged and unkempt; many had sores on their legs and arms, and appeared to be suffering from eye infections. Many of the children were badly pock-marked. The stench of refuse, stale fish, camel dung and rotting food was unbearable, and attracted clouds of flies.

One noticed a variety of racial types. The Omani Arabs predominated, but one saw also fair-skinned Persians, Bedouins, Sunussi, and negroid types who were obviously ex-slaves. Many of the Arabs, thin-bearded men with hawk-like noses, looked more villainous than any I have seen. We strolled through the bazaar, but the shops were small and untidy and displayed goods of inferior quality. In several of the shops I noticed ancient iron safes, gaudily painted, which were of English manufacture and had obviously been taken from merchantmen by the pirates. There is little doubt that most of the inhabitants of Dera, a vicious, sullen crowd, would gladly have returned to piracy had they been given half a chance. In contrast to their cruel, sardonic faces around us, I was struck by the beauty of some of the children who swarmed at our side, feeling our clothes and touching our hands. A little girl of nine or ten attracted my attention; her perfectly formed features, luminous brown eyes and Grecian lips made me sigh for a pencil and sketchbook. The little boys were delightful creatures too, with laughing eyes and white, even teeth.

The streets were extremely dark, with high walls on one side and palm-matting completely covering them like a roof, whilst the 'road' was a quagmire of mud and camel dung. Six shops out of every ten exhibited panniers of dried fruits and cereals, figs,

let, and milk are staple articles of diet, and may be supplemented by fish, meat and vegetables, depending upon the resources of the individual families.

Although trails link the principal towns of Trucial Oman and Muscat, coastwise dhow traffic forms the chief means of communication. Steamers from Indian to Persian Gulf ports call irregularly at Dibai and Sharja. A flying boat station and an airport are located at Dibai and Sharja, respectively, and are used occasionally by commercial airlines.

ENVIRONMENT AND SANITATION

Water is scarce throughout most of this region. Supplies for domestic and irrigation purposes are obtained from springs, wells and rain-water cisterns, but underground sources are unreliable, except in limited areas north of Dibai. Artesian waters are found chiefly in the vicinity of Sharja. The western part of the territory is particularly arid: water for Abu Dhabi is transported by boat from Dibai.

The standards of sanitation are generally low. The methods of sewage disposal are primitive, and, although latrines are employed in the towns, indiscriminate pollution of the soil is a widespread practice.

The insects and the animals of medical importance native to Trucial Oman are comparable with those encountered under similar environmental conditions along the eastern coast of Arabia. Few entomologic studies have been recorded, but *Anopheles culicifacies* is known to be present, and is regarded as the principal vector of malaria. It breeds prolifically in wells, cisterns and irrigation ditches. *A. stephensi* also has been identified at Khor al Kalba, and is probably a vector in some localities. Flies are plentiful in towns and villages, and several species undoubtedly are implicated in the transmission of intestinal and eye infections.

HEALTH SERVICES AND MEDICAL FACILITIES

Public health services are almost non-

existent. The local governments in Sharja and Dibai assume responsibility for the maintenance of quarantine stations under the supervision of the quarantine medical officer stationed at the British Residency for the Persian Gulf, at Bahrain. 744

There are few medical facilities. A 12-bed hospital, financed by contributions from local residents, was constructed at Dibai in 1951. The hospital and its outpatient clinics are administered by a British physician. At the same time, plans were under discussion for the opening of a hospital at 'Ajman under the direction of a Presbyterian mission doctor. 743

The Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd. established a dispensary with 4 beds for emergency cases in connection with its drilling operations in 1949. It not only serves the employees of the company but furnishes some of the inhabitants in the area with treatment. Members of the staff of the Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church of America, in Muscat, make occasional medical tours to the Trucial Coast, usually working from temporary headquarters at Dibai.

DISEASES

Little is known regarding the prevalence of different diseases in Trucial Oman. The reports of medical observers are fragmentary, and the only statistics available are those from the oil company dispensaries, which cover selected groups of the population seen over a space of a few years. Undernutrition and vitamin deficiencies are widespread, and are reputed to contribute to high mortality rates, particularly in young children. 164 146 165 164

Diseases Spread or Contracted Chiefly Through Intestinal or Urinary Tract

Amebic and bacillary dysentery are prevalent, as in other territories where the levels of sanitation are low and flies abundant. Typhoid fever is endemic, but epidemics are rare, since most individuals develop a 164 364

high degree of resistance as the result of repeated exposure to infection. Enteritis and diarrhea are responsible for a high mortality in infancy and early childhood.

Many persons harbor at least one species of intestinal worms. Occasional cases of tapeworm infection have been recorded, but the species was not specified. Ancylostomiasis and schistosomiasis are not known to occur.

Diseases Spread Chiefly Through the Respiratory Tract

Tuberculosis is a major problem, and, as elsewhere, the poor nutrition, the overcrowded living quarters and the unhygienic habits of the people favor the spread of the infection. Pulmonary tuberculosis apparently predominates, but other forms of the disease are frequent.

Pneumonia and influenza are prominent, especially during the winter months, when the palm thatch huts provide slight protection against the changeable weather conditions. Respiratory infections are regarded as an occupational hazard among the pearling crews.

Epidemics of smallpox are recurrent, and a large percentage of the children show pockmarks indicative of previous infection. Measles, mumps, chickenpox and other respiratory diseases of childhood are endemic.

Diseases Spread or Contracted Chiefly Through Contact

Gonorrhea is widespread, and serious complications due to local methods of treatment are said to be numerous. Syphilis is common, but the extent of infection is uncertain. Cases of soft chancre also are reported.

Trachoma is one of the most frequent diseases in this area, affecting a large percentage of the population. Trichiasis, corneal ulcers and other serious manifestations of the infection are often seen. Conjunctivitis is general; many cases probably are infectious in origin, and all undoubtedly are aggravated by the sand-laden winds.

164 Over 50 per cent of the individuals treated
[758] in the oil company dispensary in 1950 were suffering from conjunctivitis.

164 Skin infections are prevalent. Where
812 water is scarce the Moslem tribes sometimes
228 employ sand in the ablutions required according to religious rites. As a consequence, many acquire infections in existing abrasions of the skin. Ulcers on legs and arms are observed repeatedly. Skin diseases are reported to be particularly evident among the pearl divers.

164 Leprosy is present, but no studies have
361 been made to determine the distribution of the infection. Some tribes are said to ostracize lepers and to require them to live in segregated colonies.

Diseases Spread by Arthropods

164 Malaria is highly endemic in the towns
136 and agricultural areas, while extensive outbreaks are reported from time to time. Transmission probably is most active from April to June and from October to January, as in the oases on the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia. All forms of the disease are encountered, but outbreaks usually are attributed to *Plasmodium falciparum*. *P. vivax* predominated among the cases in which the type was determined at the oil company dispensary in 1950. Among 17 cases treated in that year, 5 were classified as due to *P. vivax*; 3, to *P. malariae*; 1, to *P. falciparum*; while 8 were not identified.

Outbreaks of sandfly fever and dengue fever are recorded occasionally, but the incidence of other arthropod-borne diseases is uncertain.

SUMMARY

162 Trucial Oman, formerly designated as the
161 "Pirate Coast," comprises 7 independent
361 sheikhdoms on the eastern coast of Arabia, near the entrance to the Persian Gulf. The population is heterogeneous, although predominantly Arab and Moslem. In 1951, it was estimated at 80,000, including about 10 per cent belonging to nomadic Bedouin tribes.

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63:Simmons et al G-5 (1941-1951) 1954
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The methods of sewage disposal are primitive; the levels of sanitation, low. The standards of nutrition generally are poor, but they vary among the different population groups.

The distribution and the prevalence of specific diseases are not accurately known. Malaria, dysentery, trachoma, tuberculosis, helminthiasis, pneumonia and skin infections are prevalent. Syphilis and other venereal diseases are widely distributed. Outbreaks of smallpox are frequent. Typhoid fever, leprosy, sandfly fever, dengue fever, measles, mumps and the common respiratory infections are endemic.

p. 315(B)

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